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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 000012

SIPDIS

DEA HQS FOR OC,OI,OEE,OSE,OIE
SECSTATE FOR INL/LP,AF/W
ROME FOR RD BENSON AND ARD PASQUARELLO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/5/2015
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SNAR](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING LIBERIAN DIPLOMATIC
PERSONNEL

Classified By: DEA CA SAM GAYE FOR REASON 1.4 (D)

1. (C) Summary: Over the past several months, DEA CA Sam Gaye received information from reliable sources regarding diplomatic personnel assigned to the Liberian Embassy in Nigeria. According to sources, Liberian diplomats are involved in a wide range of improper activities, including the use of diplomatic vehicles to transport narcotics between Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana. Nigeria-based diplomats allegedly have used their diplomatic cover to facilitate the clearing of shipments for Nigerian criminal organizations. These diplomats allegedly have conspired with Liberian criminal gangs to use Liberian diplomatic plates in order to take stolen vehicles out of Nigeria to Benin, Togo and Ghana for sale. End summary

2. (C) According to sources, Liberian Embassy Charge Rolland Bedell and First Secretary Varney Jackson are using their position to facilitate criminal activity. Bedell and Jackson supposedly are working with Nigerian drug trafficking organizations to clear illicit shipments at Nigerian ports under diplomatic cover. Sources allege these containers are usually consigned to the Liberian Embassy to the attention of Bedell and Jackson. When the containers arrive, Bedell and Jackson prepare diplomatic notes to the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, certifying the shipments as "diplomatic goods". After the clearing process, the containers are then released to the Nigerian trafficker. Bedell and Jackson then get paid for their services. Bedell and Jackson also provide diplomatic vehicles operated by Embassy drivers to transport Nigerian traffickers to Ghana, Togo and Benin. The vehicles are not subject to border search by Customs officials and are thus an attractive means to smuggle quantities of drugs overland.

3. (C) According to a source, several months ago, a head of a Lagos-based Liberian criminal gang arranged with Bedell to steal two brand new lexus jeep and take them to Ghana to sell. Bedell agreed to provide documentation including Liberian diplomatic tags (CD-83). The vehicles were stolen and driven to Accra, Ghana, using the Liberian tags. After receiving Interpol police bulletin, Ghanaian authorities impounded the vehicles in Accra. During investigation, Interpol police unit went to the Liberian Embassy to interview Bedell who claimed diplomatic immunity and refused to let the police into the Embassy compound.

4. (C) Comment: Due to the protracted Liberian civil war, Liberian diplomats in the West Africa sub-region had not received much financial support from their Foreign Ministry. Many of them have had to fend for themselves. The lure of quick money from criminal activity apparently may have tempted Bedell and Jackson. DEA CA intends to visit Amembassy Monrovia in mid-February to brief Embassy officials further. We believe CA's trip to Liberia might be an opportune time also to engage the new government and raise these issues bilaterally.

BROWNE